

[C. E. Stetler, Jr.]

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[Folkstuff - Rangelore?]

Phipps, Woody

Rangelore

Tarrant Co., Dist #7 [93?]

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FC

C.K. Statler, Jr 61, now residing at Lake Worth, near Mt. Worth, Tex., was riding the range at 10 Yrs. of age with a butcher who bought beef for the Burlington, Iowa, trade. At 17, he was employed by the [M?]. C. Campbell Co, of Wichita, Kan. This Co. sent him to their cattle range in W. Kan. At 20, he was in charge of their winter feed lots in the Flint Hills, in N.W. Okla. At 27, he spent two years on the Montana range before coming to the Ft. Worth Stock Yards. After serving six Mos. as an Asst. cattle salesman for the Evans-Snyder-Buel Co., he was appointed a regular salesman. In due time, he became their head salesman. After 30 Yrs. in this position, he quit to form his own Co., which is the C.E. Statler & Son, located in the Live Stock Exchange Bldg. He married Madge Tucker in Joplin, Mo., in 1903. His story:

"You've just struck me in a reminiscent mood. You see, I took my son in partners with me a year and a week ago, and we've just finished an inventory. Now, my son is only 17 years old but he is stepping in his father's footsteps as a cattle salesman. I believe he will be as successful as his father too because we show a profit where a good many companies are showing a loss. The reason they are showing a loss is because any one can enter

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the Commision business, and the most inexperienced men are now dealing on the Yards here along with those who have the most experience. I suppose I have the least number of customers, yet I do a big business because I still have the big rancher's confidence I gained when we were both just starting in the business.

“Now, back to myself. I was born in [Bhone?] Iowa, on July 18th, 1876. I was reared, not as a farmer or cattleman, but was raised in the city. I was interested in cattle because my father had a great interest in cattlemen. His life's vocation was in dealing with them in various capacities, such as selling and buying land, cattle, and the implements needed on the range and farm. C12 - 2/11/41 - Texas 2 My father traveled extensively. We visited about all the known ranches of his day, and told me quite a bit of his experiences.

“My father was instrumental in the naming of a certain class of people who lived in Polk County, Arkansas. He called them, 'The Levelers', because when a kinsman died, all the rest of the kinsmen would go and live with the one whi inherited the bulk of the estate until it was all lived up. Occasionally, a Leveler would find himself in debt after inheriting a bit of money or property.

“Then, another incident he related still remains vivid in my memory. He says he almost lost his life in a buffalo stampede that happened in West Texas when it was still unsettled, with only a few cattle on the range. He was making for El Paso, Texas, and was still a long way from his destination when he heard a rumbling noise similar to thunder. He soon knew it wasn't thunder because the noise continued without abating. It grew in intensity and seemed to be coming from over a hill that was in his path. Naturally, he was curious because the Indians were peaceful at this time. I don't recall the year right now, but it happened while I was still a child.

Well, all of a sudden, there came over the hill right in front of him, a long line of buffalo on the stampede. Since they were riding right toward him, he turned and tried to ride out of the way. Now, my father loved good hoss flesh, and he was riding a racing mare

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at this time, so he stood a good chance of escaping. The one thing happened that has caused many a cowman's death in the time of stampede. His hoss stepped in a gopher hole, stumbled and fell. Her leg was broken, and the herd wasn't more than 500 3 feet in front of him. I failed to tell about the two beautiful, ivory handled six shooters he always carried, and the Winchester Carbine he carried in a special built scabbard on the hoss. He knelt down behind the hoss, jerked the Carbine out and picked the buffalo right in front of him. He was a good shot, so he killed this buffalo when it was about 25 feet in front of him, then furiously pumped the gun until he had a pile of them in front of him, forming an obstruction which the rest of the herd avoided by going around. Just to give you an idea of the tremendous herds of buffalo then on the plains, this herd was about two hours in passing my father's barricade.

"My own experience with hosses began as soon as I was able to sit a hoss. My Uncle, Tom Stetler, held me on his hoss 'til I could ride him alone. As soon as I could mount by myself, I was always bumming the different men for a little ride on their hoss. I could ride good enough at the age of ten that I was hired by a butcher in Burlington, Iowa, to herd the cattle he bought in the territory about 30 miles around Burlington. He had some small slaughter pens in the city, and I herded his cattle to them. I was ambitious for a kid of that age, and I tried to get an education while doing this work. Of course, I couldn't get much education but an education isn't too severe a handicap in this business. The knack of instantly classifying and estimating cattle weights is the most important thing a cattleman can have.

"I am sorry I fail to recall this butcher's name but in a way, I'm not at fault because everybody, including myself, called him, 'Butch'. I worked for him 'til I was 17 years old. 4 Well, you know how it is. A 17 year old boy knows just about everything worthwhile to know. What he doesn't know, he doesn't need so I decided that it was high time for me to step out and show the world that I could make it on my own. I could've gone to work right near my own locality but I preferred the Wild and Woolly West. I lit out for Wichita, Kansas.

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"The M.C. Campbell Company hired me as a cow puncher and sent me to their Western Kansas Cattle Range. They didn't own the land but leased it from different land owners. My work was a regular cow puncher's work while there, but this company had a different system from most other cattlemen. They selected the cattle they wanted to sell, and trailed them to their Eastern Kansas ranges, where they were fattened for sale in the Fall markets.

"When I was 20, M.C. Campbell sent me to their winter feed lots in the Flint Hills of Northwestern Oklahoma. I was placed in charge there, and stayed there 'til I was 27, when I went to Montana for two years on the range there. I don't recall the different places I worked there. I worked for about five of them. You see, I was very choicy in those days and if a place didn't suit, the trail was free, I owned my own hoss, saddle, and took out anytime I chose. This attitude put me in a close place several times, but I oozed out alright.

"One of the times I was broke, I put in at a sheep camp for a meal. The shepherd was lonesome so he asked me to spend the night with him. He and I set up nearly all night, telling each other of our experiences. I remember one he told me. It was 5 about a young fellow who became disgusted with the kind of a sissy life he was living in the East, and decided to go West. Now, he was a graduate of Harvard and Yale Universities, and was the champion runner, or track man, of all the colleges at the time he graduated.

"Well, nobody would hire him because he had never ridden a hoss so he got pretty hungry. The fellow showed up at this shepherd's place and asked for a job. Well, the old man told him that it was a lonesome life, even 12 miles away from the main camp, told him how little money he would get, and then told him that all the provisions would be furnished. The college fellow took him up. Then the old man gave him his provisions for 15 days, then offered him a hoss. The young man turned down the hoss and they argued about it, but the young man wouldn't have it so he left without it.

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"His duty was to herd 1500 mutton wether sheep. Now, to explain, a mutton wether is a castrated ram. A mutton wether is about the easiest animal to herd there is, so the old man wasn't worried about the sheep, but he told the young fellow to report back that night about the trouble he had. Now, remember, it was 12 miles to this herd, and they were to be penned up at dark. About two hours after dark, the young fellow showed up, and they began to discuss the herd. The old man asked him if he had any trouble herding the mutton wethers up, and the young man said 'No, but the sheep were hell to pen'.

"The old man says, 'Sheep! Aint no sheep out there'.

"The young man replied, 'There was because I penned them'. Well the old man said he would have to be shown, so they saddled 6 up a hoss for the old man, and the young fellow trotted back with him. When they got to the pens, the young man had 25 jack rabbits penned up!

"While I was riding the range in Montana, I heard a good deal about the coming cattle market of the Southwest, and that was Fort Worth, Texas. I decided to come here and look the thing over. That was about the most sensible decision I ever made excepting one other. That was when I decided to ask Madge Tucker to marry me. I met her in Joplin, Missouri, while I was on my way to Fort Worth, and she took me up. She has been a real partner to me ever since, and we've had some good with the bad.

"Back to Fort Worth. We reached Fort Worth in January, 1904. I was immediately employed by the Evans Snyder Buel Commision Company as an assistant salesman. The Evans - Snyder - Buel was a nationally known company, having done business for 70 years before they employed me.

"After I served my apprenticeship as assistant salesmen for six months, I was made a regular salesman and in due time, I became the head salesman. I served 30 years in this capacity, buying, selling, and making loans on cattle. The most of my activity was here on

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the Fort Worth Stock Yards. I reached the all time high in selling cattle when I sold [163?] car loads in one day. I believe it can be proved that I've sold more cattle than any other cattleman in boots. Of course, this was largely represented in aged, three year steer cattle. I've discounted more than 10 million cattle in all. Evans Snyder Buel did six and a half to seven million dollars a year right here on the Yards. The 10 million 7 takes in the cattle I've sold since I organized my own company, too. Just from the appearances, the cattleman might seem to you to have a soft snap, but we don't. I used to wear a pedometer on the lapel of my coat, and I registered more than enough in the few years I wore it to make an average of 25,000 miles in my time here on the Yards. That would average from 10 to 12 miles a working day. That is enough to have walked almost five times around the world. No, that is unusual. Not all the cattlemen were so ambitious.

"Evans Snyder Buel used to make loans on cattle and as head salesman, I used to take a train on week ends to some cattleman's place who had applied for a loan. Mr. Buel was reputed to be the shrewdest financier of his time because he knew how to loan money. He used to tell me never to make a loan west of Sweetwater because when there was a grass failure, there is nothing to feed on but bought feed, and that runs into real money. He said South Texas was good because of the brush to fall back on. You know, a steer can almost climb a tree for it's foliage. I've seen many a steer with it's fore feet high up on a tree trunk. The South Texas trees are usually small, and there is a good deal of brush. In fact, it's nearly all brush.

"After Mr. Buel's death, the company was liquidated in 1924. The Evans - Snyder - Buel Company of Texas was organized with R.H. Brown and Jim Todd as managers. Mr. W.T. Waggoner was one of the stockholders. I took out then, and formed my own company, C.E. Statler & Son.

"By the way, let me tell you one that Tom Waggoner told 8 on himself. I know him intimately and we often discussed the old days together. This happened about 75 years

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ago when the Waggoners were almost unknown. In fact, they were just cow punchers the same as any other cow puncher.

“Well, Tom rode into a camp of an old recluse who grazed a few head he had mavericked some place. Of course, Tom didn't care how the old man got his cattle. He just wanted to get something to eat and a flop. The old man was glad to see somebody because the cow camps in those days were about 23 miles apart and nobody cared to visit much. When Tom asked for permission to spend the night, the old man says, 'Tie your hoss in the shade and come on in. I'll have you something to eat right away'.

“Tom unsaddled, fed his hoss, then went to the cabin. When he looked in, he couldn't see anything but a cook stove, a wash pan on a soap box, and two other boxes that were evidently used for chairs. No sign of a bed. There was also a small cupboard from which the old man took the food to be cooked. He served beans, corn pone, and black coffee. Tom was thankful for this food but he wondered where the old man slept. There was no sign of a bed, nor any cover in the room. Tom surmised the old man had his bed [oached?] outside and slept outside because he was leary of being cornered in a house while asleep.

“Along pretty late when both men decided to go to sleep, Tom said, 'I believe I'll get my saddle and saddle blanket and go to sleep because I've been riding all day and I'm pretty tired'.

“The old man says, 'No, you'll sleep in my bed. I never allow my company anything but the best I can give so you sleep in 9 my bed'. Then the old man got up and went to the cupboard. He opened it up, and pulled out a bullhide then spread it on the floor, and walked out into the night. He soon came back and says, 'Look hyar, stranger. You take my bed and I'll rough it the rest of the night.' Then went back out into the night while Tom gaped speechless at the bed. To those who don't know what it is to sleep on a bull hide, it is about the roughest bed a person ever used. Tom finally used the old man's bed just to be polite but he certainly didn't sleep well.

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"Now concerning the cattle industry of today and yesterday. The general public has an impression that the cowboy makes his living by roping and branding cattle. The truth is, the cowman of today uses the rope like he does a pill. Just when he has to. A rope and fat cattle just wont mix. The rope should be left in the barn except on unusual emergencies. As to the branding, all branding done today is done in chutes. The cowboys herd them into these chutes and brand them with electrical and other improved methods while standing up.

"As to cattle rustling, there are more rustlers today than ever before. Where there were only five owners and five brands in one domain, today there are 5,000 owners and brands in the same domain, therefore, cattle rustling is easier. The modern methods of rustling also different. The modern rustler has a has a high powered truck with the tail gate forming a ramp [whenddown?]. He drives his truck up to a herd of cattle, herds three or four up the ramp, closes the tall gate, and in 30 minutes, he has completed his raid and is on his way to some market where beef 10 can be sold and butchered in just a few hours. Sometimes a butcher is caught rustling for himself. He has the fastest method of disposing of his sale because he owns the butcher shop and the less who know of a crooked deal, the less chance of discovery..

"This situation discloses another situation equally as wrong. The [/Cattle?] [/Commission?] men can only charge one set price without benefit of his experience, and anybody can bring any number of cattle on the yards for sale, show a bill of sale that can be forged, and sell the cattle at prevalent prices. The result is a gradually increasing number of complaining people, widows, and so forth who have lost their cattle, or their only cow stolen.

"There was an old widow in here yesterday who had had her cow stolen. She needed the milk for her children, and had no money with which to buy another. Since no trace of her

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cow could be found, her children will just have to do without the milk necessary for their health.

“Now one of the contributing causes to this situation is the law forcing the commission men to have all deals finished and the money either paid, or in the mails to the seller in 73 hours or less after receipt of the cattle. You see, there is no time to trace the ownership of the cattle in doubt. You just have to buy the cattle and have them slaughtered before they are traced. Then, if the right owner shows up, the commission man has to make it up. Time without number, I've talked to cattlemen who failed to discover their loss 'til after their cattle has been slaughtered. I escape all this because of the way my business comes.